

Interactive River Segment Map can be found on the LSFO website



At higher flow levels the river offers a fast (5-7 miles per hour) float, but at lower flows, generally from the end of July on, one can expect to carry or drag their boat through some of the shallow areas.

We drift on down the river past the confluence with the Williams Fork, where a lone fisherman tries his luck by the railroad bridge leading to the coal mine by Axial Basin. We decide to stop for lunch on public land at about mile 131. There's a bit of shade under the cottonwoods and the slight breeze feels good enough to slip off into a brief nap.

On another day we might have chosen a "wild" option. The river flow offers everything from the mellow Class I to intense Class V rapids. The majority of the Yampa River is Class I and II, with Juniper Canyon being III-IV, depending on flows. The Cross Mountain Canyon segment is class IV to V and can be impassible at high flows. In March and April, the flow averages 500 to 1,000 cubic feet per second (cfs). In May and June, flows reach 5,000 to 13,000 or more cfs. From late June through August, flows will drop to 500 cfs or lower, and go back up to 750 cfs in late September.

As we continue down river we see some pictographs on the cliffs to the right just before reaching private lands at Round Bottom. Cows grazing along the banks stare at us as if wondering how we can move so silently and smoothly through their pasture. A little further along a couple of buck antelope do the same. There are some good shady camps on public land at mile 126 below Round Bottom. We pass these up and paddle on down around several bends to camp on the beach just below mile 117. We set up camp and still have time to walk around and find the small cave nearby with some faint but interesting pictographs.

When we get back to camp we find another member of our expedition has joined us just in time for dinner. There is OHV access from the top of Duffy Mountain, and our shuttle crew dropped him off while we were on our hike. Lucky for him there is an empty seat in one of the boats for tomorrow's float. We've seen a lot of wildlife close up: deer, rabbits, birds, even a large bull snake that gave us a good fright. What a way to top off a glorious day.

After an early morning breakfast, we head out for our second and final day. The scenery here in Little Yampa Canyon is magnificent. There are no railroad tracks and very few two track roads in the lower canyon. We are blessed with solitude and quiet as we float along. BLM has made an effort to preserve the primitive setting of the canyon, and the campsites we find are undeveloped. They are also clean and relatively untrammled due to relatively low use and leave-no-trace etiquette. Blue sky, sunshine, friends and boats. There are even a few good eating fish to be caught (as long as you are careful to catch and release any of the endangered Colorado pikeminnows).





We paddle around Signal Butte on the home stretch. The name is attributed to Native American smoke signal fires from ages gone by. A golden eagle nest can be seen high up on the cliffs on the north side of the river as it curves around the butte near Horse Gulch. Also, of historical interest is the Duffy Mountain irrigation tunnel, which was dynamited and dug beneath the mountain by one man around the turn of the century. We can see the outlet where it was piped under the river to pastures on the west side.

Our journey ends at the West Duffy Mountain river access. There is a small campground here developed and managed by State Parks under a lease from BLM. BLM has partnered with the Colorado Department of Parks and Recreation through a cooperative agreement to manage public land access points along the Yampa River and provide consistent river management as part of Yampa River System Legacy Project. The Legacy Project is a long-term effort which is supported by participating local, state, and national organizations (and major funding from Great Outdoors Colorado).

Our vehicles have been shuttled around for us already and we are able to conveniently load up our boats and equipment and head home. We give thanks for our joyous Yampa River journey and the use and protection of our public lands in Little Yampa Canyon!

- Additional River Information:

From its headwaters in the Flattops Wilderness Area to its confluence with the Green River near the Utah border, the Yampa River has given rise to a rich cultural heritage unique to this area. It is the thread that weaves our communities together - our past and our future. The Yampa River ties together many features of the Yampa Valley that make it unique and give it statewide significance.

The Yampa River is one of the most hydrologically and biologically intact rivers in the West. It supports a diversity of native aquatic communities (including four federally listed fish species: Colorado River pike minnow, humpback chub, bonytail chub, and razorback sucker - as well as candidate species such as the Colorado River cutthroat trout) and significant reaches of globally rare riparian plant communities.

The Yampa River supports a rich agricultural heritage, which shapes the unique character of this area and represents an important opportunity to find ways to perpetuate a working landscape that is compatible with the conservation of a nationally significant river system.

The ownership configuration provides an opportunity for developing model public-private partnerships: 95 percent of the Yampa River's course through Routt County is on private land, and conversely, in Moffat County 51 percent of the River traverses public lands.

Yampa River boaters have 13 access points in the 134-mile-long Yampa River State Park managed portion of the river, stretching from Hayden, Colorado, to Dinosaur National Monument on the Utah border (permits required within Dinosaur National





Monument). All access sites have some type of river access for boating or limited walk-wade fishing. Seven sites have developed ramps. Six of the accesses have camping with restrooms, hardened pads with tables and grills. The camping-area access sites have between five and 10 campsites, depending on the area.

Many of the access sites allow you to float to and from BLM lands which offer a primitive (undeveloped) camping experience along the way. No permits are currently required for private trips on this section of the river. Commercial river guides and outfitters must have a Special Recreation Permit. Along the river, there are a number of excellent camp sites available on BLM public lands (private land may only be used with the permission of the landowner). Most of these sites are marked on maps and on the ground.

The Yampa River is included as potentially eligible in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers list. The BLM's Little Snake Field Office conducted an initial eligibility and classification analysis for segments of the Yampa River in 1991. The findings are being updated in the current Resource Management Plan revision process. Wild and Scenic suitability recommendations will be included as an outcome of the revision process.

Fishing for northern pike and smallmouth bass is quite popular on the upper segment of the river. However these and other non-native fish species have been significant predators and competitors of the endangered Colorado River fish: the Colorado pike minnow, razorback sucker, humpback chub, and the bonytail chub. In recent years the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program has been actively removing northern pike from the Yampa River as a part of the recovery effort.

Weekends are most popular for floating the Yampa and you are likely to encounter other people. Commercial canoe trips and boat rentals are available.

The Yampa Valley is recreation intensive, renown for its high quality scenery and recreation opportunities. Over 3.5 million recreation user-days are logged annually by residents and visitors, with almost 2 million recreation days (including 1 million skier days) concentrated in the Steamboat Springs area including Steamboat Lake and Stagecoach Reservoir State Parks.

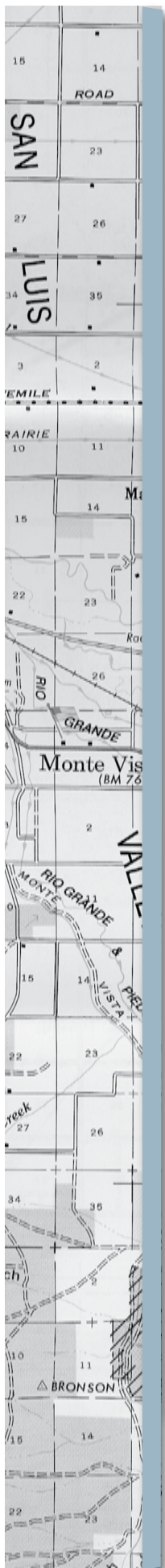
RIVER ACCESS SITES:

The following river access sites provide access to the BLM public land areas along the Yampa River.

South Beach (a.k.a. Yampa Project pump station) (river mile 139) located off Colorado State Highway 13 bridge south of Craig. Vault toilets, hardened campsites, table and fire pans are provided. State Park access and/or camping fee required.

West Duffy Mountain (river mile 106) located approximately 33 miles down river from S. Beach. Vault toilets, hardened campsites, table and fire pans are provided. State Park access and/or camping fee required.





Juniper Canyon Access (river mile 94) located 12 miles down river from Duffy Mountain Access Site. Vault toilets, hardened campsites, table and fire pans are provided. **CAUTION:** There is a diversion down river in Juniper Canyon, and it is not recommended for open canoes because of the Class III rapids. There are also smaller rapids below the diversion through the canyon. State Park access and/or camping fee required.

Maybell Bridge (river mile 90) located 28 miles west of Craig on U.S. Highway 40. Vault toilets, hardened campsites, table and fire pans are provided. State Park access and/or camping fee required.

Sunbeam is located approximately seven miles northwest of Maybell.

E. Cross Mountain is located approximately 18 miles southwest of Maybell. This site sits in a beautiful ravine, with picturesque sights of Cross Mountain and the surrounding area. Vault toilets, hardened campsites, table and fire pans are provided. State Park access and/or camping fee required. **DANGER:** Cross Mountain Canyon is for expert kayakers and boaters only. It is rated Class V at high water and may be closed for safety reasons by the Moffat County Sheriff's Dept. above 5,000 CFS.

W. Cross Mountain & Deerlodge Park are located at the west end of Cross Mountain Canyon, and the east end of Dinosaur National Monument. Both sites are under management by the National Park Service. Below Deerlodge Park, all boaters must secure a permit to float on the Yampa River from Deerlodge Park through Dinosaur National Monument.

Website Info Links

For a clickable map and more detailed information about Yampa River recreation opportunities go to...

<http://www.co.blm.gov/lspa/rivers.htm>

To learn more about the Yampa River State Park go to...

<http://parks.state.co.us/Parks/YampaRiver/>

For river flow information visit...

<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/CO/nwis/uv?09247600>

